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On the Hill



As noted in the December 23 Friday Letter, Congress passed the Food Security Act of 1985 (H.R. 2100) which is commonly referred to as the farm bill. The President signed the measure on December 23 and the legislation is now Public Law 99-198.

Following are some of the major provisions of the new law—

Food Stamp Certification: Food stamp eligibility requirements are expanded and benefits increased at a cost of \$374 million over the next three years. Job Training Partnership Act earnings will be counted as income except to dependents under 19. The earned income deduction will be raised from 18% to 20% of earnings. Deductions for dependent care and shelter, now capped jointly at \$139, will be separated and increased to \$160 and \$147, respectively. The asset limit for non-elderly households will be raised from \$1500 to \$2000 and the \$3000 limit for elderly households will be extended to one-person households. Farmers may offset farming losses against other income. AFDC and SSI households will be categorically eligible.

Work Programs: All State agencies will be required to implement employment and training programs by April 1, 1987, with varied State performance standards (not over 50% of the work population by FY 1989).

Program Administration: States must submit plans to improve ADP systems by October 1987 and begin implementation by October 1988. A six-month moratorium is

imposed on collecting quality control sanctions. Five statewide and five local simplified application projects are authorized.

Redemption: Sales taxes are banned on food stamp purchases by the start of the fiscal year after the first regular State legislative session (no later than October 1987).

Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico's block grant is increased from \$825 million to \$852.75 million in FY 87, to \$879.75 million in FY 88, to \$908.25 million in FY 89, and to \$936.75 million in FY 90.

Commodity Programs: The Commodity Supplemental Food Program elderly pilot projects are extended. The Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is reauthorized for two years, and States must match TEFAP administrative funds starting in January 1987. A survey of TEFAP household characteristics must be conducted and reported to Congress. The National Commodities Processing Program is extended through the 1987 school year. The cash-in-lieu-of-commodities study is continued for two years.

Nutrition Monitoring and Education: The Secretary must expand nutrition monitoring of the low-income population and establish a nutrition education program for the food stamp population involving the Extension Service and FNS.

—Story by Bill Tluek, OGAPI Legislative Affairs Staffer.

Washington Area News

Dr. King's Birthday Observance: A special program has been planned for FNS employees in POC to observe the birth date of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The event will be held on Wednesday, January 15, 1986, at 10:00 a.m. in the 10th floor conference room.

The program will feature Mr. Jimmie Lucas, Agricultural Program Specialist, with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Mr. Lucas, who is a complaints and appeals hearing official, will present a recitation of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech which was given during the 1963 march on Washington.

Plans are being finalized for a governmentwide observance on Thursday January 16. This will include observances in 26 cities across the country. Another feature of the nationwide celebration will be "Living the Dream" pledge cards which can be signed by individuals. These cards will be made available to FNS employees at the POC program on Wednesday. Cards can also be obtained from Roosevelt Butler, Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division. When returned to Departmental officials, these signed cards will be presented to Ms. Coretta King to be placed in the archives of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Creative Nonviolence in Atlanta.

Questions about the upcoming activities can be answered by Roosevelt Butler on 756-3202.

Personnel

Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate: Employees who claim a total federal tax exemption for Calendar Year (CY) 1986 must submit a new Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate, prior to February 16, 1986. Usually full-time student employees file an exemption from federal taxes.

Effective with Pay Period 04 (02/16/86 to 03/01/86), those employees who claim total tax exemption and who have not filed a Form W-4, for CY 1986 will have Federal taxes withheld as if they were single taxpayers with zero withholding allowances. Form W-4's filed for prior years do not extend tax exemption into CY 1986; a new form must be filed for CY 1986.

If there are any questions, please contact your Personnel Office.

Personnel Operating and Information System (POIS)

Implementation and Training

POIS system training and implementation in the Southeast, Midwest, Mountain Plains and Mid-Atlantic Regions has been scheduled for the weeks of January 27 and February 3, 1986. Northeast and Southwest Regions previously implemented the system as pilot tests for POIS.

The Western Regional Office will continue to use POIS through use of a remote terminal, until their scheduled personnel office move has been completed. Two trainers will spend a week in each region training the region's personnel staff on processing personnel actions, producing informational reports, querying the data base and using dBase on the personnel master file. Northeast Regional Personnel, Elaine Lyte and Susan Tosi, will be assisting Personnel Division staff with the training.

After this implementation, employees will be able to receive notification of personnel actions immediately after processing. With editing of personnel actions during processing and with the elimination of dual entry at the National Finance Center, fewer pay problems will occur. Also, from a practical standpoint, lower communication costs will result from use of this system, since it is not on line with the National Finance Center.

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the following vacant positions. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Personal Qualifications Statement, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you're interested in a Headquarters position, apply to the Employment Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexan-

dria, Virginia 22302. Apply directly to Headquarters office for all GS-14 and 15 positions. For Regional positions, apply directly to the Regional Office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or you can get copies from the appropriate Regional or Headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Listing by Vacancy Number

Job Title	Series	Grade	Closing Date	Vacancy Number	Organizational Unit
Clerk Typist*	GS-322	2/3/4	Open	85-69	FNS
Clerk*	GW-303	1/2	Open	85-81	FNS
Secretary Typing**	GS-318	5/6	01/23/86	86-01	BUD
Cash Clerk*	GS-530	4	02/03/86	86-02	ACD
Investigator***	GS-1810	5/7	02/03/86	86-03	PAD
Computer Programmer Analyst****	GS-0334	13	01-31-86	86-04	IRMD
Home Economist	GS-0493	11/12/13	01-27-86	85-H-40	HNIS

*Local Commuting Area

**FNS Headquarters

***Government Wide

****FNS Nationwide

BUD - Budget Division

ACD - Accounting Division

PAD - Program Accountability Division, Chicago Area Office, Chicago, Ill.

IRMD - Information Resources Management Division

HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service

